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789 796 country. So sure were they that their ceremonies, done in the real old way, had brought the rain that they actually went to tell their missionary of what we had done, but he was not sympathetic, and they appealed to me on my return from the north, half wistful, half doubting, asking if I had ever heard of such rains since the white men came into their country. I have given a short description of this ceremony in *Bantu Studies*,[8] and I do not want to go into detail here. The essential thing is that the whole tribe, or as many of them as possibly could, gathered together at the chief's kraal to take part in this gorika ?ap, which was to ensure the coming of rain in the New Year.

Rather than linger over this feast, which provides if possible for an adequate supply of water for the life of the tribe, I want to describe in this paper the ceremonies which are performed with the water which actually is available.

Water is essential to any community, but it is only where it is exceedingly scarce, as among our people, that we find it playing so large a part in the ceremonial practices.

●182 823 Taking water, then, as an example of something extremely important to the Namas, I wish to show that they believe it to have great protective powers against any antisocial forces, but at the same time to be extremely dangerous to the members of the society whenever they are withdrawn in any way from the powerful protection which society gives them. Thus the social character of water is ambivalent. Whilst in the normal routine life of the tribe it is used with impunity, and indeed with little regard or ceremony, it acquires on critical occasions a twofold significance. It becomes, on the one hand, a source of protection against evils threatening the tribe and its members, and it is, on the other hand, a danger to the members of the tribe who are, for one reason or another, in a critical condition. I wish to suggest further that this protective power is simply the expression of the social value of water.

182 It is to Professor Brown that we owe this concept of "social value" and the light it throws on so many seemingly trivial customs among primitive people. His use of this concept in his analysis of the Andamanese customs and beliefs gave me the clue to many practices which I had noticed so often among the Namas. Interpreting the Andamanese customs, Professor Brown[9] writes: "By the social value of any thing, I mean the way in which that thing affects or is capable of affecting the social life. Value may be either positive or negative, positive value being possessed by anything that contributes to the well-being of society, negative value by anything that can adversely affect that well-being." The individual accustomed, especially in childhood, to have the conveniences of social life provided for him by others.

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[8] *Bantu Studies*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 3, 4.

[9] "*The Andaman Islanders*," by A. R. Brown. Cambridge, 1922, Ch. V. p. 229.

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might take them more or less for granted, that is to say, as Professor Brown puts it, "he does not of necessity consciously and directly realise that value. He is made to realise it indirectly, through the belief impressed upon him by tradition, that the thing in question affords protection against danger."* And, further, I would stress, that this same protective thing is dangerous apart from the full social life. It is not claimed that the leaders of the tribe have wittingly used these means to make the individuals in it appreciate the blessings they have, but an analysis of primitive ceremonial enables us to conclude that this is the psychological basis of many of the customs, and that they are the means used to maintain the cohesion of the tribe, by making its members realise that to society they owe the things of value they have, so that they are willing to keep up the old customs and traditions on which it is believed the well-being of the whole depends. "So that the protective uses of such things," says Professor Brown, "are really rites or ceremonies by means of which the individual is made to realise (1) his own dependence on the society and its possessions, and (2) the social value of the things in question."† Things which are useful to the community, important for its existence, come to partake, as it were, of the strength of the community, and by this power they afford protection to its members.

Let us first consider the protective power of water. Among the Topnaars of Walvis Bay and the Zwartboys of Franzfontein, and probably among all the Namas, cold water is, or was formerly, thrown on the grave of a person newly buried, and often the men return again the next day to throw more water on the grave. The reason given me was that it hardened the grave, so that no wild beasts could dig there, but the reason given to Theophilus Hahn in the seventies of last century was that it "cooled the soul of the departed."‡ Further, when the people return from the grave to the kraal, all the inmates, except the bereaved family and the near relatives, who must on no account touch water, wash their hands in cold water, and cold water is sprinkled on the place in the hut where the body was lying before it was taken to be buried. In itself the washing of the hands with water might not be significant, especially as each person is obliged by custom to pick up handfuls of earth and throw them into the grave, and one might suppose that they were merely washing the dust off, but we have noted that the near relatives do not touch the water, and, further, the reason given for the washing on the part of the other inmates is that they would get sick if they did not do so. The cold water sprinkled in the hut also prevents the sickness that was there from spreading.

Now, one of the great dreads of the Namas is the /Hai /Khoa, the ghosts which hover over the graves, or some from them, and who formerly were thought to cause most of the sickness among

* *Ibid.*, p. 324.
† *Ibid.*, p. 325.
‡ Theo. Hahn, *The Supreme Being of the Khoi-Khoin*, T. Hahn, p. 113.

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The other name for Sarie, the whirlwind, is //Gûoab, translated nowadays by the word devil, and having exactly this significance for the natives, owing to missionary influence. It is very difficult to get a complete understanding of what the natives originally understood by //Gûoab. In the mythology of the people //Gûoab is the evil chief who kills great numbers of Tsui //Goab's people, and Tsui //Goab is the great hero of the Namas and other Khoi Khoin tribes. Tsui //Goab went to war with //Gûoab and finally destroyed him by giving him a blow behind the ear. But though destroyed by Tsui //Goab, he came alive again, and one form of the legend tells the story as though the fight were an annual one. However that may be, //Gûoab is also connected with the /Hei /Nûm, in fact, Gûoaga in the plural is simply another name for /Hei /Nûm, and old David Swartboy, the present chief of his tribe, insisted very earnestly to me that the /Hei /Nûm were simply //Gûoab. "The names are two, but the thing is one," he said. David's views are strongly tinged by missionary teaching, and for him the /Hei /Nûm which troubled him so much when he had influenza are simply evil spirits sent by the devil to trouble him.

Further than this in the analysis I do not want to go here, but I think I have said enough to show that a whirlwind is a thing of evil omen, a form which the /Hei /Nûm or //Gûoab can take, and that it brings sickness and perhaps death to the inhabitants of the kraal unless precautions are taken, and that these precautions consist chiefly in scattering cold water in its path.

Again, when one is visiting an old locality of a tribe, one is exposed to all kinds of dangers. The ghosts of the //Nûm, the ancestors, haunt the place and one must protect oneself against them and propitiate them if one is to escape. Thus, ten years ago I visited, with a native guide, a spot which had long been deserted by the Topnaars. It was a long day's journey up and down great sand dunes, and both I and my guide caught bad colds. The next day my guide's wife came to me and, shaking her head wisely, "I knew I should find you ill," she said, "and I have been scolding my husband, who should have known better. When you got to Wartel you should have gone straight to the water, and put a stripe of wet clay on your legs and on your forehead, and then you should have said:

"Ti //Nâmero 'Hotse, (My ancestors' territory).

Gûoa 'Khoi tse te se. (Evil ones kindly to meet me).

Then all would have been well."

Other matter." (I owe you five.)

In this case, the water is not sprinkled about or splashed on to the person, but from the water-hole wet clay is taken and put on to the body. I think the important thing here is that one begs the goodwill of the spirits, claims relationship with them, and enters once more into possession of the old tribal

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751 territory by contact with its waters. A similar ceremony takes
B33 place when a Nama goes visiting relatives in another tribe. The
•182 head of the kraal visited must take wet clay and black from the pot, and put a broad stripe on the visitor's forehead, so that he may be able to "eat nicely and drink nicely," as my informant put it. Here it would seem the stranger is given the protection of the society into which he has entered, and is free from danger that might otherwise beset him in a strange place. The preceding example shows perhaps what the danger is, namely, the hostile /Hoi /Nâin, and this example makes a little clearer the nature of the protection sought when one is visiting an old locality of the tribe. One identifies oneself with the place and its spirits, and so gets protection and support instead of hostility.

751 The use of soot black from the pots is also very interesting, but I do not want to go into many details here. It is always used as a sign that one is being admitted to the full life of the society, and so to its protection. Thus, one must put a black mark on a baby when it visits one's werft for the first time, otherwise it will be ill, and after a period of isolation from the full life of the tribe this black mark is always put on the forehead at the ceremonial meal which signalises the reintroduction to full social life.

754 The next example is a little different. In the old days, there
756 were among the Namas Khoi Aogis, witch doctors, men who could
B23 cure people who had been bewitched, but who might also themselves resort to bewitching, and so make people ill or kill them. I have never myself met with a real Khoi aop unfortunately, and it is very hard to get from the natives any account of their [791] training or method of becoming Khoi Aops. The missionaries have exerted all their influence to prohibit the practices of the witch doctor, and it is probably illegal to find a Nama to-day who really knows all the secrets of that profession. An old man of the Bondelswart tribe told me that a child born with a caul might become a clever Khoi aop, if he were given the caul to eat as a child. Others, however, have told me such a child became a great aop, a seer. In any case, it is certain that the Khoi aop was considered in some way connected with the /Hoi /Nâin, and therefore had an immunity which others had not. He could impart his immunity to others and so cure them of disease by enveloping them with his vapour, as it were, which was contained in his body dirt and perspiration, and which he could scrape off as he needed it. The Khoi Aop was, therefore, a person of considerable importance in a community, and was much respected so long as he used his power for good, but he might also use it for evil, causing sickness instead of curing it. Now, the Namas considered that all sickness was caused either by /Gâunâb,* or the /Hoi /Nâin, or by persons somehow in contact with them, the witchcraft practitioner, and one of the

* See Theophilus Hahn, Tsuni-/Goam, p. 87, and Peter Kolben, Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum, Nuremberg edition, 1719, p. 488.

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the navel string has fallen off. In Walvis Bay the baby is taken out and turned over and over in the rain by the mother or grandmother, so that it will know the rain and not be frightened of it, I was told. An Africander woman gave me a rather different account. The baby is taken out by one of the women who has been present at the birth, and is laid on a piece of skin in the rain. The old woman jumps over the child and back again; then lifts it up, tossing it this way and that in the rain, saying, "Hri-a Hei-o Tó gaba tsi" (I toss you in the rain). This is done, said the old woman, so that the rain will not hurt the baby. It is the baby's introduction to the source of water.

Of another type of case I have never been able to get information myself among the tribes I have visited, but Theophilus Hahn writes: "The girl or girls who have become of age must, after the festival, run about in the first thunderstorm, but they must be quite naked, so that the rain which pours down washes the whole body. The belief is that they will get fruitful and have a large offspring." He continues: "I have on three occasions witnessed this running in the thunder rain, when the roaring of the thunder was deafening and the whole sky appeared to be one continual flash of lightning. This was among the Nǂami /Nun; among the gei /Khauas at //Nuis, and among the //Ogais on the banks of the !Kham River."*

These three tribes I have never visited myself and do not know if this ceremony used to take the place of the usual method of introducing the girls to water, or whether it was additional. I rather think it must have been additional, otherwise the girls would be prevented from using water over too long periods in many cases. The underlying motive of the ceremony seems the same as in the many we have noticed. The girls being now full members of society, the rain will protect them and help them to attain the full life of their new status.

Such are the Nama ceremonies connected with water. I have tried to show that they are all intelligible and form an harmonious whole if we realise that water is, of all the essentials of a social life, the most difficult for this primitive people to provide, that it is, therefore, one of their most important social possessions, and is invested with great power, essentially protective and wholesome so long as social life runs its normal course, but exceedingly dangerous to all the forces which threaten society, or to the members of the society themselves when the social bonds are loosened.

* Fauni //Ganet, p. 67.